

PANEL TO REVIEW PANTHER CLASHES

NY 12/16/69
26 Will Look Into Actions
by Party and the Police

By CHARLAYNE HUNTER

Twenty-four private citizens, representing the fields of civil rights, law, politics and business, joined Arthur J. Goldberg and Roy Wilkins yesterday in announcing the formation of an independent commission to "direct a searching inquiry" into clashes between the police and the Black Panthers that have resulted in the deaths of 28 Panthers since January, 1968.

"The past weeks' events in Los Angeles and Chicago have raised grave questions over the whole range of civil rights and civil liberties as applied to Black Panthers," the commission asserted in a statement read at a news conference by Mr. Goldberg.

On Dec. 4, in Chicago, the Illinois chairman of the Black Panther party, Fred Hampton, and a Peoria party leader, Mark Clark, were killed during a police raid in which four other Panthers were wounded. The Panthers contend that the police burst into Mr. Hampton's apartment and "murdered him in his bed." The police say that a woman in the apartment opened fire on them and that a "shootout" ensued.

Los Angeles Incident

On Dec. 8, in Los Angeles, the police fought a four-hour battle with Panthers at their headquarters. Three Panthers and three policemen were wounded. Later, 11 Panthers were arrested there and 13 at other locations, and the police announced that they had found a cache of weapons at the Panther headquarters.

While deploring much of the Panther doctrine, particularly its violent aspects, Mr. Wilkins, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and Mr. Goldberg, a former Supreme Court Justice, emphasized that agreement with, or support of, the Panthers was not the aim of the commission.

"The process of justice cannot proceed on the basis of predawn raids, killing and by some stories that are not even plausible," Mr. Wilkins declared during the news conference at the headquarters of the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., 10 Columbus Circle.

Mr. Wilkins said that Mr.

Hampton had been a former president of the Youth Council of the Maywood, Ill., chapter of the N.A.A.C.P.

"Although he strayed from the N.A.A.C.P. way," Mr. Wilkins said, "he was a fine young man who wanted for his people only what we want for everyone. To see him shot down for weapons is what spurred under the pretext of a search us."

An Orderly Inquiry

Mr. Goldberg said that the commission, which consists of 16 Negroes and 10 whites, would conduct "an orderly and dispassionate inquiry." The staff, which has yet to be selected, will be situated in the offices of the Metropolitan Applied Research Center at 60 East 86th Street.

The commission will be headed by Norman C. Amaker, first assistant counsel for the Legal Defense Fund.

In addition to its own investigation, the private commission is urging the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence to open an investigation "of all incidents involving the local police forces and the Black Panther party which have occurred across the country in the last few years."

Following is a list of convenors of the commission:

Clifford Alexander, former chairman, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
Julian Bond, Representative, Georgia House of Representatives.
Sam Brown, coordinator, Vietnam Moratorium Committee.
W. Haywood Burns, executive director, National Conference of Black Lawyers.
Kenneth Clark, president, Metropolitan Applied Research Center.
Ramsey Clark, former Attorney General.
William T. Coleman, Jr., partner, Dilworth, Paxson, Kohn & Levy.
Representative John Conyers, Jr., Democrat of Michigan.
John Douglas, co-chairman, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.
George Lindsay, co-chairman, Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.
Melvyn Dymally, National Conference of Black Elected Officials.
Marian Wright Edelman, director, Washington Research Project.
Jean Fairfax, president, Black Women's Community Development Foundation.
Jack Greenberg, director-counsel, N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
Mayor Richard G. Hatcher of Gary, Ind.
Phillip Hoffman, president, American Jewish Committee.
Jesse Jackson, director, Operation Breadbasket.
Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld, president, American Jewish Congress.
John DeJ. Pemberton, executive director, American Civil Liberties Union.
Louis Pollak, dean, Yale University Law School.
Joseph Porter, Western regional

director, Black American Law Students' Association.
A. Philip Randolph, vice president, A.F.L.-C.I.O.
Cynthia Wedel, president, National Council of Churches.
George Wiley, executive director, National Welfare Rights Organization.
Whitney Young Jr., executive director, Urban League.
Mr. Wilkins.
Mr. Goldberg.

The panel will be called the Commission of Inquiry into the Black Panthers and Law Enforcement Officials.